

## FOREWORD

By

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In a new edition of his book, *Social Science in Government*, Richard P. Nathan stated that government demonstrations are time-consuming and costly, and suggested that three conditions should be present before public officials embark upon them:

- Policy makers and public managers should be genuinely interested in the new policies or program departures to be studied;
- They should be uncertain how and to what extent new policies or programs will work; and
- They should be willing to wait for and respond to demonstration results.<sup>1</sup>

In 1999, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) initiated a multi-phased Youth Offender Demonstration Project, consistent, in large measure, with Nathan's dictum. In essence, the purpose of the Project is to determine how to best organize collaboration among workforce development, justice, education, and other agencies, within state and local One-Stop delivery systems, to assist the reentry needs of youth offenders and youth at risk of court or gang involvement. In March 2001, ETA published an initial interim evaluation report of the Youth Offender Demonstration Project (Research and Evaluation Monograph Services 01-F, 2001). The interim report found that an emerging public model for organizing local service delivery was a key factor in those Project sites that were successful in achieving their goals.

This final Technical Assistance Report of 14 round one Youth Offender Demonstration Project sites supports that interim finding, confirming the existence and merits of an effective public management model. As ETA's contractor, Research and Evaluation Associates, Inc., recounts, technical assistance helps resolve problems and creates innovative approaches by providing expert advice to project staff through a variety of on-site and off-site mechanisms. The major contents of this report include:

- A description of the technical assistance approaches and services provided to Youth Offender Demonstration Project sites between 1999 and 2001.
- An introduction and explanation of ETA's public management model for state and local workforce development agencies. The demonstration model, deduced during this round, appears to effectively aid state and local workforce development agencies in implementing cross-agency service delivery approaches for youth offenders and youth at risk of court or gang involvement.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard P. Nathan, *Social Science in Government* (The Rockefeller Institute Press, 2000, p. 52).

- An examination of the technical assistance processes and recommendations to plan and sequence similar technical assistance efforts more effectively in future demonstrations.

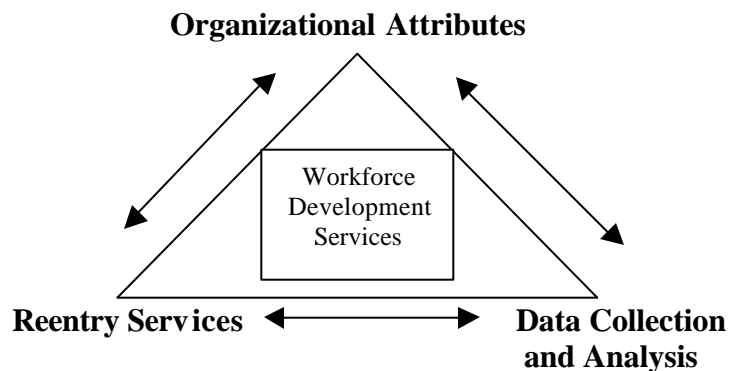
### Public Management Model

The real world offers a severely constrained state for conducting the kind of demonstration that may yield watertight conclusions. The ETA is attempting to conduct research in an area in which, as far as we know, the One-Stop delivery system has not gone before. As Research and Evaluation Associates relates, the Youth Offender Demonstration Project sites tested a variety of service delivery strategies in a diverse set of communities to discern effective practices that have universal application. As a result, this round of demonstrations identified a set of nine effective organizational attributes shared by the most successfully implemented demonstration projects. (See report for more detailed descriptions and practical examples of these attributes.) Specifically, the most successful Youth Offender Demonstration Project sites shared the following attributes. They each:

- Created a well-conceived plan;
- Had previous experience with the juvenile and criminal justice system;
- Collected and maintained project data;
- Developed a community support network;
- Maintained strong grantee involvement;
- Connected the workforce and justice systems effectively;
- Leveraged resources through collaborations and partnerships;
- Developed a continuous improvement system; and
- Shared leadership and information.

When these attributes exist in an operating environment, and are combined with project services [workforce development services, reentry services (i.e., alternative sentencing and community service, gang prevention initiatives, aftercare and route counseling services, a.k.a., case management)] and data collection and analysis, they have been shown to assist sites in accomplishing their goals and appear to be integral to well-managed and successful projects. The ETA hypothesizes that four elements (i.e., organizational attributes, workforce development services, reentry services, and data collection and analysis), taken together, form a continuous improvement loop that makes up the public management model, as depicted below. The model, under further testing and refinement, was shown to be effective in those sites that provided richer employability services and increased employment to youth offenders and youth at risk of court or gang involvement.

## **Youth Offender and At-Risk Youth: Model for State and Local Workforce Development Agencies**



Public policy researchers may be interested in the role that technical assistance played in aiding the development of this new knowledge. At its crest, these efforts illuminated how *institutional change*, engendered in the emerging public management model, ultimately affects *individual outcomes*. At this juncture, ETA and Research and Evaluation Associates believe that it is likely that state and local workforce agencies that structure their work around the public management model will be better able to formulate and implement a youth offender and at-risk youth service delivery strategy that responds to local needs. Further, the report states that the public management model is expected to assist future projects to:

- Assess the unique needs of the community;
- Identify key stakeholders and partners integral to the success of the projects;
- Map and access resources within the community; and
- Better implement an effective integrated service strategy tailored to meet the community's specific needs.

The ETA and Research and Evaluation Associates also learned important lessons about effective practices for providing technical assistance. In comparing projects, Research and Evaluation Associates relates four general themes that surfaced in relation to the delivery of technical assistance:

- A philosophy of technical assistance should be based on the projects' openness and willingness to continue to learn;
- It is important that technical assistance is sequenced appropriately to recognize that partnership development and planning are early issues requiring attention, while other issues emerge as the project engages the youth. Some issues cannot be addressed until the fundamental programming has been developed and implemented;
- It is crucial to acknowledge the importance of project structure and allow the project structure to change, perhaps repeatedly, until the goals of the project and the needs of the target population are met adequately; and
- Relationships undergird technical assistance efforts and are built on trust and candor.

## Impacts

Research and Evaluation Associates indicates that the ability of project participants to sustain long-term employment and establish associated stability factors, are important outcomes, but are not within the scope of this project to determine or evaluate. In future demonstration rounds, ETA anticipates that its evaluation will include an analysis of the Project's long-term impact on individual employment outcomes.

As in any large undertaking, no single person or group is solely responsible for success or failure. Foremost, the dedicated staff of Research and Evaluation Associates deserves recognition, particularly Lois MacGillivray and Abel Ekpunobi, for assisting ETA in unraveling the attributes of project effectiveness. As Research and Evaluation Associates indicates, each Youth Offender Demonstration Project team member, particularly Mary Vines and Dan Ryan, were stalwart in their commitment to demonstration activities. A special thanks is extended to team members Catherine A. Goodenow, Amanda Briggs Spickard and Allison M. Vitalo, who provided cogent comments and suggestions to this report. Finally, throughout this project, the wisdom and guidance of Stephen A. Wandner and tireless support of Gerard F. Fiala were inestimable.

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